Trading of Indian Saras

2419. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of ENVIORNMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that trading of Indian Saras, the State bird of Uttar Pradesh, is prohibited under the Wildlife Protection Act;

(b) whether it is also a fact that there are only 8000 Saras all over the world, of which 6000 are in Uttar Pradesh, but these are much on sale in the market of Lucknow; and

(c) if so, what steps are being taken by Government to rescue the bird, for conservation?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) Yes, sir.

(b) and (c) As per the survey report of Wildlife Institute of India, the estimated total population of Saras in the world is 8000-10,000, out of which about 4000-5000 birds are in Uttar Pradesh . There have been media reports regarding sale of Saras in the market of Lucknow but these have not been confirmed on investigation. However, to prevent any sale of Saras cranes constant vigil is kept by the field staff.

Sophisticated Weapons for Forest Officials

2420. DR. KARAN SINGH:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FOREST be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan to equip various forest officials with sophisticated weapons and communication devices, to tackle the poaching menace;

(b) if so, whether Government would consider to give more powers to forest rangers and officials, to combat poaching; and

(c) if not, reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) The State Governments are provided financial assistance for

purchase of weapons and communication devices under various centrally sponsored schemes to tackle poaching.

(b) and (c) "Forest Officers" including forest rangers and others have powers to combat poaching under The Indian Forest Act, 1927, The wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and various State Acts and Rules. It has also been decided to amend The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to make it more effective.

Environmental clearance for Orissa projects

2421. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some projects in Orissa are pending with his Ministry for environmental clearance;

(b) if so, what are those projects, particularly related to irrigation and industry;

(c) the reasons for the delay in giving clearance to those projects; and

(d) the steps taken to accord early clearance to those projects?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) and (b) Six projects related to mining are pending for environmental clearance. However, no projects related to Irrigation and Industry are pending for environmental clearance.

(c) and (d) Decision on environmental clearance to project is usually taken within 90 days of receipt of complete information.

Commercial production of GM Mustard

†2422. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal to permit Genetically Modified (GM) Mustard, prepared by mixing five types of foreign genes, for commercial production, is under Government's consideration;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.